



## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 99th Bomb Group Historical Society

Sep. 1, 1981

Published bi-monthly. Editors, George F. Coen and Frank English  
 Society Officers; President, George F. Coen  
 Vice-president Michael Yarina  
 Secretary, Joe Kinney

## Reunion Schedule

We were not able to get the proposed Winter Reunion under way and it has therefor been cancelled by agreement of the Group at Rapid City.

Albuquerque, NM, April 1982. Exact date will be set before publication of notices. Contact Thomas J. Gamm, 12225 Victoria Falls NE, Albuquerque New Mexico, Ph. (505) 296-7075

Fall, 1982, Muskegon, Michigan. Contact Earl Silvis, 7540 Old Channel Trail, Montague Michigan, 49437

## MISSION REPORT

Thanks to Mike and Lettie Yarina the Rapid City reunion was a most memorable event, filled with a succession of wonderful individual items to remember.

Friday night the Group went by Charter Bus to Mount Rushmore for the impressive lighting ceremony, a very beautiful service indeed.

Saturday began with a buffalo breakfast at the Circle B out in the lovely Black Hills. We were then treated to a slide show on the making of Black Hills gold jewelry, followed by a business meeting, at which it was decided to have a Fall Reunion in 1982 at Muskegon, Michigan with Earl Silvis, Tom Reed, and Joe Chance as hosts. (Thanks, fellows).

Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Jackson then gave a fine exhibition of puppetry, with assistance from Martha Coen.

The evening banquet featured a delightful organ program with dancing. Eldon Ahl had made heroic efforts to locate the words to the Air Corps Song, which none of the 99th seemed to know, and George Cepek kept the Group roaring with laughter at his jokes.

On Sunday the Group visited in the area. Martha and I, together with Rex and Edith Creathouse visited the Badlands National Monument, and by Monday we had all dispersed.

The Reunion represented an enormous amount of effective work on the part of Mike and Lettie, and the Group is very grateful to them.

Hank and Marie Parks were unable to attend because Hank had the miseries. However, Hank assures me that he is feeling fine again and that he and Marie will see us in April.

The Group sent General Upthegrove a card with best wishes. We will continue efforts to schedule a reunion nearer to Bradford.

Ing. Gaffarelli Alessandro  
Viale Mantegazza 51  
RIMINI (Italy) 47037

Rimini 5 April 1981

The 99th Bomb Group Historical Society  
2908 Aliso Dr. N. E.  
Albuquerque, N.M. 87110  
U.S.A.

Dear Sir

For some time I have been interested in the history of Rimini referring to the years of the Second World War and particularly in the history of the air-actions carried out by the 15th Air Force over this town in the period of time from November 1943 until June 1944.

In order to get inherent documentations I contacted the Historical Section of the Department of Defense of Washington and they let me have some interesting records; nevertheless, in spite of my searches, I have not been able up to now to find detailed documentations suitable for a complete and faithful reconstruction of the historical events of that time. So I am now trying to find recollections and diaries of the pilots and air crew members who served in Italy during the Second World War and took part in those war flights.

I should be very grateful to you if you would kindly inform me whether the 99th Bomb Group Historical Society keeps memories, diaries and recollections referring to the war-flights over Northern Italy and particularly over Rimini; in the affirmative I should like to know whether it is possible to have copies of those documentations. Of course I will reimburse the expenses for postage, photocopies, etc.

All the inherent news shall be very interesting for me (targets, number of aircrafts engaged, bomb-loads, flight durations, times and dates, losses, enemy interference and results of the operations).

Moreover I should be very glad to be informed if you know names and addresses of veteran pilots who took part in the above-mentioned air actions of the 99th Bomb Group in order that I can write them and ask them (if possible) their reminiscences.

Thanking you in anticipation for your kind reply, I am

Yours faithfully

*Gaffarelli Alessandro*

Dear Signor Gaffarelli:

Ours is still a fledgling organization and is mostly devoted to social events. However, we are receiving a few items of interest, and I will be pleased to furnish copies of them to you as we identify them.

Thank you very much for the pictures, especially the one of the 99th taken from the ground. We were very proud of our close formation flying.

As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, it is hard to remember any particular incidents against the general mental exhaustion of combat.

Sincerely

George F. Coen, P.E.



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Mr George Coen  
2908 Aliso Drive NE  
Albuquerque  
New Mexico 87110

28th July 1981

Dear George

A very belated thank you for both your letter and your most informative news letter. I note with interest the gradual accumulation of a 99th Bombardment Group 'archive' from the personal reminiscences of 99th B.G. veterans and the memorabilia they kept from their days in the US Army Air Corps. You may already know about the large collection of film held by the National Archives in Washington DC showing the 99th and other 15th USAAF bomber units in action during the 1943-1945 period and the photographs held nearby by the Defense Audio-Visual Agency in Crystal City. Our programme, "Auschwitz and the Allies", will include combat film showing the 99th in action - it is very impressive footage, not showing perhaps the grimmer aspects of daylight bombing operations and the sometimes heavy casualties incurred among the bomber crews but often visually stunning, polished silver B-17s flying serenely in close formation above the clouds. I recommend it.

There is a British gentleman, Mr Eric Munday, who is quite an expert on the 15th USAAF and he can be found at the Air historical Branch, Ministry of Defence, London. Mr Munday has been very helpful to us and would be glad to assist. I await the replies to your July Newsletter with great interest.

Thanking you once again.

Yours sincerely

James Barker  
Researcher "Auschwitz and the Allies"

Dear Mr. Barker;

29 Aug. 1981

Thank you for your letter.

I inquired at the reunion whether anybody had been to Auschwitz or to Paradubice. Two of my friends pulled out lists of their missions and discovered that they had been there, which is of no help. Col. Barnett's name was in the retired Officers' List until a year ago, Col. Phillips died over 20 years ago. We have no information yet on Ford Lauer or Charles Lawrence but will keep looking.

Mr. Bloomstein tells me that the information must be available in September in order to be of use, since the reportorial team will be here in the U.S. during September. I am not being facetious when I say that 50 missions rather get all jumbled up in the mind, and unless the flak or fighters were especially noteworthy one just doesn't have much to remember.

So, fellows, if you have any information on the Auschwitz mission of Aug. 20, 1944, please rush it to the New York Office of the BBC. We will appreciate a copy for 993GHS files.

Best wishes to the BBC

George

5025 N. 5th St.,  
Arlington, VA 22203  
July 27, 1981

Dear George,

In the July newsletter, there is an inquiry about Philip J. Phillips by the BBC correspondent.

After the war, I had been exchanging Christmas cards with Phil until he died over 20 years ago.

Sorry I have no good news.

Philip J. Sweeney  
HQ.

1285 Wayne Rd. Group Hdqtrs.  
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania 17201

Dear Geo:

Thank you for the informative letter. I was especially glad to read Gen. Upthegrove's letter. I am glad he is still with us.

I was the Group Communications Officer for most of our stay in Europe. When the war was over, I returned to the States and was assigned to the Officers Training Command in Orlando, Florida.

I am so glad you are getting together a complete roster of the Group.

Here are the names and addresses of two men who were in our group. (The first name--Philip J. Sweeney, is already on our May '81 roster.) The second is John J. Richmeier (346th Communications), 7100 Murphy Court, Camp Springs, Md. 20746  
Best of Luck  
Samuel B. Hess

Dear Samuel,

I know it sounds like a broken record, but it brings back old times, hearing from you. Along with you, we also appreciate the fact that Gen. Upthegrove is going strong. He was the best! Wish he could make it to one of our reunions. (Not to mention seeing you of course, along with Phil, and John, naturally!) It is nice that our roster is getting bigger, isn't it? Maybe one of these days we'll be able to have our own state mini-reunions. In the meantime, our best to you, and all our old friends from Headquarters. See you soon!  
the

Dear George,

Thanks for your prompt reply. I really enjoyed reading the newsletters and checking the membership roster. I recognized a few names on it. Really brought back a lot of memories.

I'm enclosing my membership fee with the hope that you don't get discouraged in rounding up more members. You are doing a good job.

Hope to make a convention soon but may have to wait for one on the East coast. P.S.--Ground crew--Walla Walla to end at Foggia #2.

Best Wishes,  
Edward E. Geoffroy 546th  
P.O. Box 132 Chesapeake Beach, Md.  
20732

Dear Edward,

It's like gilding the lily, but we appreciate the fact that you took the time to write, and notably, that you 'upped' again, with the rest of us. We tried our damndest to keep them flying, didn't we? Just like the rent notice--hope to see you soon!  
fhe

Route 1  
La Center, Kentucky 42056 546th

Dear George,

I have certainly enjoyed hearing from you and the 99th. I intended to write sooner but have had a bout with a virus and neglected to do so.

Glad to see that you have located Gen. Upthegrove. I was his crew chief during his 50 missions and have always felt that the war could have been shorter if there had been more like him.

George, I have a copy of the 99th 300th Mission Log in pretty good condition and will send it to you if you don't have one. It was published in Nov. 1944.

I only have one address that you don't have listed. I believe you will find Byron C. Ordway at 327 15th St., Seal Beach, Calif. 90740.

I won't be able to attend the reunion planned for April, but you have my best wishes. Am enclosing check for \$10 to use where needed.

Sincerely,  
George E. Crice

Dear George,

On behalf of George Coen, and all the rest of us '99ers', it is wonderful to hear from you, after all these years. Sure do hope all goes well with you, and yours!

I joined the 99th (347th) in Sioux City, Iowa, in Nov. of '42, just after you had come from Walla Walla. George, I was down on the line with Hdqtrs Tech Supply when we got to Navarin, through Tortorella. In July of '43, I flew 37 missions as a Photographer/Gunner. On August 23, '44, our pilot, Warren Christianson, brought beat-up B-17G 232 home, after we bailed out over Yugoslavia (our target was Vienna, Austria).

Anyhow, George, my point here is to remark that our crew had our pictures taken in front of good old 'El Diablo', and I have my copies to show off. That was one hell of a plane, George, and speaking for myself, I'm sure you deserve the expertise due you for keeping the old baby going. (I'm speaking of El Diablo, of course!)

We are all proud of the fact that Gen. Upthegrove was our first C.O. Remember when he left us? We all thought he was going to head a B-29 outfit, and we were to join him! Boy, what a letdown that was. Our chins touched our kneecaps for weeks!

IN closing for now, I tried to get in touch with the Byron Ordway you mentioned, in Seal Beach--but no luck. I live in Whittier, Calif., which is only about 20 miles away. Maybe he has written you, in the meantime, I hope. Because of people like you George, Our ranks are getting larger, so thanks for getting on board again.  
fhe

1511 Oak Leaf Lane  
Kissimmee, Florida 32741 346th

Dear George,

Thank you for the newsletter and info on the 99th. I was in the 99th 346th Sq. I worked in Communications (Radarmen) and did a lot of special services work with Capt. Trent at Hdqtrs--also worked a little bit with Poyes (Porges?)-(first name, George), and the group band. I joined the group at Kilmer and went all the way with the group.

I remember quite a few of the fellows listed on the roster and have sent applications to three guys I have been in touch with. Bill Flynn--a pilot, Al Karcisco--crew chief, and Bill Brukart, a mechanic. I'm sure they will send them in. I'll continue to look for members of the squadron.

I am not sure yet as to whether I can attend the reunion in April, but send me the stuff anyway and I'll sure try to be there or at a subsequent meeting.

Thanks,  
Frank

Dear Frank,

As we are both Franks', let's be Ernest about this! We are glad to have you on this tour. Really enjoyed your letter. Hope you, and the rest of our old friends made it to Rapid City. Many thanks for your cooperation, as we need all the help we can get. By the way, Capt. Trent and I were good friends, both in the 347th, and at Hqs. Wish we could track him down as he was one of the best! See you soon at one of our conclaves.  
fhe

741 W. Oak St.  
Palmyra, Pennsylvania 19078 346th

Dear George,

Please send me the information regarding the 99th Bomb Group reunion to be held in April.

I served as a waist gunner on the crew of Walter Moody's 17 #797 and later #201. We joined the 99th at Forgia, Italy in February 1946 as a replacement crew with the 346th Bomb Sqd.

We completed our tour of missions and returned to the states in October of 1946.  
George A. DuLac

Dear George,

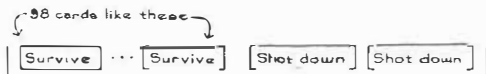
We note that you didn't make it to Albuquerque as we have a list of course, of those who did attend. Sorry you couldn't make it as we had a great time. Maybe the Rapid City reunion? Anyhow, it is good hearing from you, and hope you will swell our ranks.

I am curious about one thing, however. You referred twice to the year '1946'? Didn't you mean '1945', or even '1944', maybe? Our war, V-E day, was over in May 1945. For now, hope all goes well, and that we will see you soon, also!  
fhe

THE COLLINS CASE 227

In his novel *Bomber*, Len Deighton argues that a World War II pilot had a 2% chance of being shot down on each mission. So in 50 missions he is "mathematically certain" to be shot down:  $50 \times 2\% = 100\%$ . Is this a good argument? (Hint: To make chance calculations, it is necessary to see how the situation being considered resembles a game of chance. The analogy here is to draw 50 times at random with replacement from the box

From Statistics,  
Freeman  
Pisan  
& Purves



Surviving 50 missions is like drawing the card "survive" 50 times. What is the chance?)

The answers to these exercises are on p. A-46.

Answer  $0.98^{50} = 36\%$   
So now you know.

3720 East Monterosa St.  
Phoenix, Arizona 85018 347th

Dear Coen,

Received the 99th BG Newsletter and I must admit it rekindled many memories. My wife and I plan to attend the reunion at Albuquerque having reservations at the Four Seasons.

I was with the 347th Squadron in Foggia during March '44 to August '44 completing 50 missions (34 sorties).

George, I think you are doing an outstanding job keeping the Historical Society alive and I would like to help support it. Enclosed is my application with my check of \$10. The additional money may be used as our Society desires.

See you at the reunion.

Sincerely,  
Chet Sieczynski

Dear Chet (Chester),

As we all know, the April affair was a barb, and it was areal pleasure meeting you. I thought your letter was too good to let slip by. First, because you 'rejoined', but mainly, as I'm sure we all agree--the comments you made, as regards our hero, George Coen. He truly is, a Man ~~For~~ All Seasons! I'm trying, in my own small way, to help by answering some of the correspondence. Hopefully, this will take a small measure of weight off George's back. I never was a typist, as can plainly be seen, so please forgive me, one, and all! Anyhow, Chet, it was a real kick getting together with you all, after all these years. Hope you made it to Rapid City, also.

So, for now, Chet---'Bomb Sour', also, 'Masty Lumbago'. By the way, I didn't know you were Chinese(?) From one old 347th'er to another---'Gesundheit' for this time.  
file

343th  
209 Hawthorne  
Burlington, Washington 98233

Dear George,

I was quite interested in the 99th Bomb Group newsletter. I flew as flight engineer in the John Bullock crew in the 343th between December 1944 and V-E day. I am not familiar with most of the persons mentioned. I of course remember Herb Holdsonbeck and his navigator Kelsey since they were the lead pilot and navigator many times when I flew.

I am sorry that I will not be able to attend the Albuquerque reunion because at this particular time of year I am quite busy until July. I am enclosing my check for \$5 with my application for membership.

Sincerely,  
Clyde Tuttle

Dear Clyde,

Likewise, it was areal pleasure hearing from you. Thanks for joining, as it is folks like you who will help bring us up to strength, once again. We all know how it is with the 'daily grind'--but sometime soon we'll get together. Glad to hear you enjoy the newsletters--at least that will keep you in touch. As we all know, George has put his heart and soul into this effort for quite some time. Our best to you--hope to see you at one of our 'roundups' in the near future!  
file

1620 California Ave.  
Ft. Wayne, Indiana 46805 (347th)

9

Dear George,

A few weeks ago I was contacted by C.E. "Skooter" Miller, phoning me from his home in Ohio. He told me of the 99th organization and I suppose he forwarded my name to you; and that is how I came to receive a mailing of your newspaper. Thanks very much for the paper, even though I did not know the people in the articles. I only served in Africa at Tunis, and Italy at Foggia, from Sept. '43 to Jan. '44, when I was shot down over Sofia, Bulgaria, so I did not get to know many of the men outside my own squadron, the 347th.

I am real glad to enclose my check for membership. Sorry, I can't make the April reunion but wish you a good time and a big crowd.

Sincerely,  
Dale E. Shupe

Dear Dale,

Welcome aboard! As good old George "Trigger" Coen would say---'we need more good men like you!' The reunion at Albuquerque was a real dandy, Dale, and I was glad to be able to attend. Sure do hope Rapid City was a success, also. Sorry to hear you boys got knocked down, but the important part is that you made it home. In the meantime, take care, and one day soon, we'll all get together again and swap lies.

Frank H. English (fhe) 347th

125 Beacon Hill  
Hot Springs, Arkansas 71901 346th

Dear George,

Enclosed is my check for \$10 for '81 and '82. May not be able to attend the Alb. party as I will be moving into our new home at that time, but hope to catch the next one. By the by, I noted in DAV the 97th (next door to us at Foggia--also a '17 outfit), plans to meet in Little Rock, in August.

Best Regards,  
Jim Thomas

Dear Jim,

Many thanks for your letter, for joining us, and the info about the 97th. The more the merrier, as they say! Among other organizations, I too am a DAV 'lifer'. Regarding the 97th, a lot of people don't realize that they made the first daylight raid into France from England when the Sturmf was forced. I was proud to be a member of the 5th King in Navarin, Oudna, and Tortorella, and of course the 99th was the best!

Jim, It's good to have you back again--hope you made it to Rapid City, also. Our best to you, and hope to see you soon at one of our 'skindies'.

the  
1126 Washington  
Glenview, Illinois 60025 346th

Dear George,

Was glad to hear from you and information on the 99th Bomb G.P. I was one of the original members of the 346th Bomb Squadron when it was formed at Boise, Idaho, and moved to Walla Walla, Washington. I was chief clerk of operations of the 346th until we returned from Italy in late 1944 ('45?). I attended the first reunion in Chicago, but have lost contact since then.

I have been in touch with a couple of our group a few years ago. Met with Walter V. Gadz, R.D. #1-Box 2120, Vernon, New York 13476. He had the names and addresses of a few other members of the group. Also, saw Paul Pitch in Peoria, Illinois. I don't know if you have their names. I do not have Paul's address, but he had a meat market there. If you write the postmaster there, I am sure they would forward a letter to him.

Since leaving the service, attended Northwestern University. Am now working for Deluxe Craft Mfg. Co. in Chicago (will enclose my card). Am married and have a son and six daughters.

I will be unable to attend the reunion, as my son is getting married that weekend, but I sure would like to hear from anyone from the 346th. Also, if possible, to get the names and addresses of those you might have. Also, would like any information about the 99th Historical Society, how to join, etc. Hope you have a super reunion and my best regards to all.

Very truly yours,  
John W. (Jack) Field  
(1-312) 724-5525



Dear Jack,

Believe me, it's great to hear from you, and to hear how well you are doing. (Friends, Jack is the Sales Manager, Catalog Division, of Deluxe.) I trust by now, Jack, that young George Coen has sent you an entry blank, or you used the one in our newsletters, including the other names mentioned, and that by now, you old reprobates are members in good standing (or sitting down, as the case may be!) Incidentally, is Chicago, Ill. part of the United States? Seriously, as one who started out as a 'pencil pusher', also, I hand it to you, as it took all kinds to make our outfit the best. Thanks for writing, and if the creek doesn't rise, hope to see you, and all the other 'gentlemen' at our next 'hurrah'. By the way, talked to your daughter, as you know, regarding the date you came home from Italy. Didn't you mean '45, OK did you come home early on rotation, or points, etc.? Regardless, good luck, and hope to see you soon. When I was in Hdqtrs. Tech Supply, down on the line, Jack, I worked with R.R. Sorrow, and Jerry Wilson. Does that wring a bell? fhe

1600 W. Quincy St.  
Garrett, Indiana 46738

Mr. Coen,

I can not tell you how honored I am to have received your warm and thoughtful letter. My mother cried and I got one hell of a lump in my throat. Seeing you are formerly from Ft. Wayne it sounds as if you may have known my father at one time. He would have been very proud of the 99th's recent activities. I just wish he were here to write you himself.

The articles enclosed along with my letters may be used at your discretion. I hope they will be useful in your efforts. I must thank Mr. Stumpf and Mr. Magness for forwarding my letter. Those gentlemen, along with the 97th BG reunion assoc., are a fine group of men, also. All of you share a unique common bond, the B-17; a flying fortress.

Well done from one who enjoys freedom.

I just wrote those two telling of three other local men who were involved with B-17's. One of them left the same day as Dad for Camp Perry, OH. He went into the mechanical field and was with the 8th AF., 34th BG. He is Mr. Franklin Hillegeats, Jr. and works for Conrail along with having a large dairy farm near Avilla.

Mr. Paul Anderson and Mr. Philip Von Derbosch were with the 94th BG, 335-334 sqds. Mr. Anderson also saw some action in Korea. He was a tailgunner and passed away several years ago. Mr. Von Derbosch was a waistgunner and is currently Mayor of Garrett.

Once again I thank you sir for everything. It is a privilege to be able to communicate with you fine people. May God bless you all. Larry(Larry A. DePew)

(Note of explanation--Larry's father, Arthur DePew, deceased, was a former member of the 416th, and joined same at Walla Walla on Nov. 12, 1942. He flew combat as a waist gunner and his first mission was on April 10, 1943. Going by a copy of his missions that Larry enclosed, Arthur flew his 50th on Oct. 1, 1943. This then, would be Algeria, and Tunisia. Larry also sent a copy of our first 50 missions, likewise, a wonderful three column story about Arthur, including his picture in full flight outfit, that was printed in the 'Garrett Clipper' of Garrett, Indiana.)

Dear Larry,

Every so often, in retrospect, one gets to thinking if certain things (or a thing), was worthwhile doing. I must say, speaking for myself, and I'm sure, many others in our Group, after they read your letter, will agree that you certainly take after your dear father! You, Larry, in your own way, are a hero, just like your Dad was. Not too many people remember us these days! Your remarks were like the proverbial 'breath of fresh air'. On behalf of George Coen, and all of us 99'ers, thank you from the bottom of our collective hearts! Thank you also, Larry, for all of the memorabilia. We will keep same for our 'archives'. It would be a real pleasure and honor to have you, and yours, come to one of our gatherings. The doormat is waiting for your feet to step on!

May God bless you also, Larry. This old world is far richer because of the likes of people like you! So long for now, but not goodby!

Sincerely, and with Best Regards,  
The entire 99th Bomb Group

84 Warren St.  
 Revere, Mass. 02151 416th

Dear George:

Was very pleased to hear of the new organization of the 99th Bomb Gp. I was a member of the organization in the 416th Squadron, joining the outfit in Sioux City, Iowa and stayed until the European conflict ended.

I was in the orderly room and remember many of those who have written letters to you. I keep in touch with a couple of former members and enclose their addresses so they can be added to your master list.

Harold A. Caldwell	and	Teo Treleven
3315 Green Garden Rd.		122 N. Sidney
Aliquippa, Pennsylvania		Kimberley, Wisconsin 54136

My brother was a pilot in the 416th also, but I believe he has written to you previously.

It will be a pleasure to join the organization and enclosed find my check for same.  
 Arnold F. Eydenberg

Dear Arnold,

Along with all the other good men in the 416th, not to mention the rest of us from the 346th, 7th, and 8th, we are glad you are now one of us, again! We appreciate the additional names you included. You, sir, are a wealth of information, and we do hope your other buddies will, or have joined. By the way, I don't see your brothers name on your roster? Try and get him on the stick also, OK? We can't do battle without a full crew! Seriously, welcome in the main door--hope to see you all soon at our next gathering, or shortly thereafter. Arnold, to say the least, we all are glad that Mr. Soen has gotten our outfit off the ground, again! He deserves all the credit in the world!  
 the

10 GIBSON CT.  
 TIFFIN, OHIO  
 44883

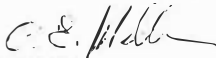
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DEAR GEORGE :

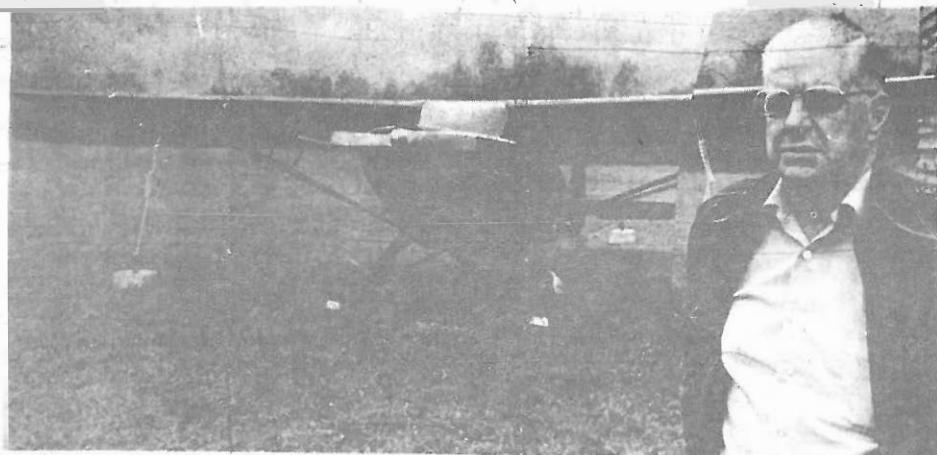
HERE IS SANDY PLAUTZ ADDRESS  
 SANFORD PLAUTZ  
 203 STEPHANIE ST.  
 KERRVILLE, TEXAS

I MAY HAVE SOME OLD ORDERS WITH NAMES ON THEM NO ADDRESS'S  
 OF 99th CREWS I'LL SEND COPIES IF YOU LIKE.  
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# It Took Jake Merritt 34 Years to Own His Own Airplane



**GETS HIS DREAM—For Jake Merritt of Roscoe, hopes of owning his own plane came true when he purchased the 1946 Aeronca Chief behind him.**

ROSCOE—J.W. Merritt, better known as Jake to most Roscoe residents, is senior clerk at the Roscoe post office.

"I have been flying since 1946," he remarked.

Last April he fulfilled a dream that has been with him for almost a lifetime. He purchased his first airplane.

Some might label it a vintage aircraft. It is a 1946 Aeronca Chief which he purchased from Amelia Barker. What is remarkable about the aircraft is that it had been stored since September, 1948 until March of 1977, and it had only logged 169 hours.

"I have flown it about 50 hours since so the tack clock reads 223 hours now."

In 1977 Mrs. Barker married a mechanic who had done an overhaul on the machine, installing several new parts.

"As far as Jake is concerned, the plane is like new.

"It is just nicely broken in," he remarks.

Aeronca Aircraft Corp. of Midletown, OH had built the unit. That firm is now out of business, having been taken over by Telenca which has also gone over the drain.

"They still have a parts system," he remarks.

**Along Hiatas**  
For Jake, it has been a long journey.

"Although I have been flying since 1946," he relates, "I didn't get my wings while bringing up the interest in flying commenced long before he took the controls. He had attempted to get into the Air Cadets prior to World War II, but he was rejected because he had a 'light problem.'"

He joined a flying club, comprised primarily of Roscoe residents, and in which he had membership from 1947-55.

The plane in which the owner flew was an Aeronca "Champ" Champion of 1946 vintage.

"That was a tandem job," he said. "This is a side-by-side."

As membership in the club dwindled, his ownership in the old aircraft increased, but the group eventually sold the ship in 1954.

Still, Jake's love of being above ground continued.

He went to Montgomery where his fondness for the metalulate Norm Quade, airport owner, grew and his enjoyment of flying and Henry Quade's superdelicious free coffee increased as he took up his re-found flying career in 1974.

**Flew a Cherokee**  
Until April from his rejuvenated spirit to get off the ground he had been flying a Cherokee Tri-Cycle.

The purchase of the Aeronca, he discovered, meant re-learning the differences between the modern plane and the old Chief.

"I found that I'd forgotten the difference between flying a tail dragger and the Cherokee which had a wheel in front instead of the back."

His Aeronca is more difficult to handle. "I'd forgotten what I knew."

The plane which he has purchased is in A-1 condition. Its air speed of 85 miles per hour at cruising, is slower than that of modern craft, and he finds that it requires a steadiness in windy and turbulent conditions, beyond that of planes which will fly at greater speeds in windy and more turbulent conditions.

At 85 mph it generates 2150 rpm's, uses three and a half gallons of fuel per hour.

His plane was formerly yellow with an orange stripe, but it has been repainted black. Original fabric was linen, "doped" and covered with primer and paint. From the windows down it still has the original fabric, but other portions have been covered with ceconite (plastic).

Has 750 Hours  
Jake now has 750 hours of air time. The plane has been in the air much less time than Jake despite the fact that he has been logging plenty of hours since he purchased it.

He has it stored at Hodge's Air Field at Rockland.

To modern pilots, the plane may be "old-fashioned." There is no electricity on it.

Jake uses a hand held radio to make contact with ground. Currently the radio is undergoing repairs, among which are to install crystals.

Normal radio length is 122.3, but he wants crystals installed for 122.7 for Montgomery Air Field, 121.5 for emergency and 122.5 to tune into Russell Hodge's transmission system.

**Bulletin Board Message**  
He had been seeking purchase of a plane for some time, going to all airports around, including Sidney, Oneonta and Montgomery among others.

"I looked at the bulletin boards," he explained. "That's where you find planes for sale. I had completely forgotten Wurtsboro, but one day I stopped there. Tacked underneath some others, I found the notice for this plane."

And presto! A brief discussion with Mrs. Barker, and he found his love (pardon to Mrs. Merritt, of course).

"My wife doesn't want to learn how to fly it," he said, "but I have been trying to teach her to land the aircraft in case I decided to take a nap or some other such emergency should arise while she is flying with me, and she does fly with me quite often."

There were 20 years when Jake Merritt did not fly, but a man does not forget the enjoyment of

looking down at his environment. For Jake, life's gusto is taking off into the wild blue yonder.

The particular enjoyment is doing it in something he owns. In this case it's that side-by-side Aeronca Chief.

"And it's just nicely broken in," he adds.

"Flying is quite an expensive hobby for an ordinary bloke like me, so I have plans to try my hand at aerial photography at some further time. The only thing I need now is a good camera and a few rolls of film. There is a pretty big demand for this type of pictures now days, if I can sell a few it will help pay expenses. I am waiting for one of my wealthy friends or relatives to donate the necessary equipment; then I'll be in business. While I am waiting I will just fly for the love of flying."

Gentlemen:

I see where you all had a reunion on April 11.

I am the Sec./Treas. of the POW's that were interned in Romania. I am always looking for new members. I have gone through my roster and picked out all the 99th men and have included it for your information. I'm sorry that I couldn't have gotten it to you sooner.

We have been having reunions for ten years and will hold our 11th reunion this year in Cherry Hill, New Jersey on the 14th of August.

As you notice on my roster, there are some blanks and those are the ones that I am looking for. I would appreciate it very much if you would by chance have any of their addresses. I sure would like to have one of your rosters. It would be nice to take to our reunions.

Thanks

Roy B. Meyer  
4589-G Northside Parkway  
Atlanta, Georgia 30339

Dear Roy:

Thank you for the roster, and here is ours in return.

Best wishes,  
George

\* \* \*

Hello George:

Here's hoping that this note finds you and your family in the best of everything.

Enclosed you will find my five dollar dues to the 99th Historical Society.

Today I received a letter from Walter Klukas much to my surprise. He mentioned that a navigator by the name of Jack Fiegenbaum, Sioux City Iowa, was part of his crew. My wife of 36 years is from Sioux City Iowa originally and we were out there during the Thanksgiving Holidays. I found Jack's No. in the telephone Directory but was unable to reach him at home. I left a message for him to call me at my brother-in-law's home but never received a call from him. So much for that.

George, Robert L. Wood Jr. of Arlington, Virginia tried to organize a reunion here in the East and may be in possession of other names of the 99th that you do not have.

I sure do envy you people living in the Southwest area, especially since we've been hampered by a cold and dry winter. I remember playing some baseball in Santa Fe, New Mexico upon my return to the States in 1944. Was very impressed with the city and climate.

Hoping to hear from you again I remain

The Old Sarge

Carmen P. Reese

Dear Sarge:

It is a treat to hear from you.

We have lost Jack Fiegenbaum, and we miss old Cactus Jack. It is good to hear that he is still around.

Carmen, we are working with Robert Wood to bring about that Eastern reunion. Both Robert and Ed Zawilla have graciously furnished their entire mailing lists and have done a lot to raise the membership to the present 243 Members.

Note that we have set up a Muskegon reunion for next year so you web-footed Yankees would not have to endure the scorching sands of New Mexico.

Hope to see you soon.

Best wishes

George

\* \* \*

Dear Mr. Coen:

I've been looking for a reunion of the 99th since I left Italy in early '45. It's about time. Please send me all the particulars at your earliest convenience.

I was in the 99th as an aircraft cmdr. in '44 and '45 when the 99th was in Foggia, Italy. I stayed in the Air Force and retired in 1964.

Sincerely

Pete Forrest.

Welcome, Pete, welcome. We hope to see you soon.

salud y pesetas

George

\* \* \*

Dear George,

Saw your recent article regarding a reunion of the 99th. I would be delighted to help in any way I can. We attended one in 1958 or 9 which we really enjoyed.

If I remember correctly we were in the original 99th and I believe in the 416 Sq. together.

regards

Terry Barton

Right on, Terry. And we came back together on the Empress of Scotland, didn't we? Why I haven't seen you since we escaped from Camp Patrick Henry. Remember when they threw the M.P. guards around us on the docks at Newport News to keep us from evaporating, and then lost us in the Army system? And the base personnel were lining the road jeering what they thought were new recruits. They quieted down when those fighter pilot Majors at the head of our line came abreast of them, but nobody seemed to know what to do with returnees until we got that Colonel out and over to the Air Base.

Well, Terry, we will be pleased to work with you for a reunion. There certainly are enough members in Florida to do it. Meanwhile there is nothing to keep you from having a mini-reunion on your own, and we will help with that too.

Best of everything to you

George

\* \* \*

97th Bomb Group Reunion Association

Dear George,

We are planning a 97th B.G. second reunion on 10 and 11 July 1981, at LRAFB and you are invited to attend.

If you recall there was a fire at Maxwell AFB in 1954 and most of the 15th AF Combat Films burned. I need two or three 30-50 minute combat films for July showing and I am wondering if you might have some to loan me? Would certainly appreciate--

Have many new names and addresses, so we should have quite a crowd for the second reunion.

--\*\*\*\*\*

Take care, don't stumble, and may God bless.

Good luck with your reunions--

best regards,

Mag

Sorry we cannot join you in a reunion but we are locked in at LRAFB

Dear Mag;

I had been looking forward to meeting you at the Little Rock reunion, and had planned vacation for that week, but had to sit by the phone with micro-computer at the ready instead. We got away five days late, which got

us to Rapid City in good shape. I must have taken the wrong heading from South Dakota, because we ended up back-packing in Manitoba, and the Canadian Postal Service was on strike, else I'd have written sooner. We were five weeks on the road.

We did not know until your letter that the combat records had been burned. Ped, I haven't gotten much pressure yet for a composite reunion, but will keep plugging away.

Best wishes and thanks  
George

\* \* \*

We have an enlarged Instamatic picture of the April reunion available. This 5 x 7 snapshot shows 29 of the 99th out by the swimming pool. Send \$4.00 to this office.

George

#### PROGRESS REPORT

Membership as of 23 Aug 1981 249

Have established contact with 173G and 453rd BG.

The IRS requires some changes in the by-laws before they will certify us as a non-profit organization. We will work it out with the help of Tom Gamm and Bernie Barr and will get the necessary paperwork done in good legal fashion.

We copied the escape diaries of Dahl and Mical: at the reunion, as well as various news clippings from our era.

#### FINANCES

Balance May 10	\$ 235.27
Dues and contributions	200.00
Sale of 12/15AF Books	45.00
minus expenses, Newsletter	\$425.62

Balance Aug. 27	\$ 54.65
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Early payment of 1982 dues of \$10 will be much appreciated. Thanks.  
George

#### BOOK REVIEW

Aphrodite: Desperate Mission Jack Olsen Pyramid Books

An excellent account of one of those routine missions where nothing can go wrong go wrong ... The book is about a plan to load war-weary B-17s with explosives and send them against the Germans, the pilot bailing out over England. Non-fiction.

#### TAPS

Alfred "Frenchie" Marcoullier. 347th. Passed away in 1980 at the family home in New Hampshire.

Application for Membership. \$5 for 1981 (Optional-you get 1981 Newsletters)

\$10 for 1982

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Squadron \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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